

Mr. Speaker, there is a crisis of confidence in American health care today. A majority of consumers believe that insurance plans often compromise the quality of care to save money. Managed care must be more than managed cost.

I am concerned that we are going to see a fig tree growing in the House of Representatives, proposals from the other side, from the Republican leadership, that are no more than fig leaves. We have seen it with campaign finance reform. We can see it coming with tobacco. It may come with HMOs as well.

The solution to our problem is the Democrat-sponsored Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998. It provides access to necessary care. It ensures access to specialists. It provides direct access to a specialist for patients with serious ongoing conditions. It would allow women to see their obstetrician or gynecologist without prior authorization, and it requires access to and payment for emergency room service. It also provides a fair and timely appeals process when health care plans deny care, and it provides protections for the patient-provider relationship.

It does that by banning gag clauses. It protects providers who advocate on behalf of their patients, and prevents drive-through mastectomies.

I urge my colleagues to supported the Patients' Bill of Rights Act of 1998.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BLUNT) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 24, 1998.

Hon. NEWT GINGRICH,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 5 of Rule III of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on June 23, 1998 at 9:05 p.m. and said to contain a message from the President whereby he returns without his approval H.R. 2709, the "Iran Missile Proliferation Sanctions Act of 1998."

With warm regards,

ROBIN H. CARLE.

IRAN MISSILE PROLIFERATION SANCTIONS ACT OF 1998—VETO MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 105-276)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following veto message from the President of the United States:

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2709, the "Iran Missile Proliferation Sanctions Act of 1998."

H.R. 2709 would require sanctions to be imposed on foreign individuals and companies if there is "credible infor-

mation indicating that" they transferred certain items or provided certain types of assistance that contributed to Iran's missile program, or attempted more than once to transfer such items or provide such assistance. These sanctions would last at least 2 years and would prohibit sales of defense articles and services; exports of certain dual-use items; and United States Government assistance.

My Administration unequivocally supports the critical objectives of fighting terrorism and taking steps to halt the transfer of missile technology to nations whose foreign policy practices and nonproliferation policies violate international norms. This legislation, however, is indiscriminate, inflexible, and prejudicial to these efforts, and would in fact undermine the national security objectives of the United States. Taken together, the flaws in H.R. 2709 risk a proliferation of indiscriminate sanctioning worldwide.

Such indiscriminate sanctioning would undermine the credibility of U.S. nonproliferation policy without furthering U.S. nonproliferation objectives. Indeed, the sweeping application of sanctions likely would cause serious friction with many governments, diminishing vital international cooperation across the range of policy areas—military, political, and economic—on which U.S. security and global leadership depend.

Specifically, H.R. 2709 would require the imposition of sanctions based on an unworkably low standard of evidence: "credible information indicating that" certain transfers or attempted transfers had occurred. Such a low standard of evidence could result in the erroneous imposition of sanctions on individuals and business entities worldwide—even in certain instances when they did not know the true end user of the items. The bill would also hinder U.S. efforts to enlist the support of other countries to halt the objectionable activities by imposing an unreasonable standard for waiving the bill's sanctions. In addition, the sanctions proposed by the legislation are disproportionate. A minor violation (e.g., the transfer of a few grams of aluminum powder) would carry the same penalty as a transfer of major proliferation significance. This, too, undermines U.S. credibility and increases foreign opposition to U.S. policy.

H.R. 2709 does not specifically refer to Russia, but it will affect that country. The legislation does not allow flexibility sufficient to reflect the progress made by the Russian government in formulating policies and processes whose goal is to sever links between Russian entities and Iran's ballistic missile program. At the urging of the United States, President Yeltsin, the Prime Minister, Russian security services Chief Kovalev, and Russian Defense Minister Sergeyev have all made clear that proliferation of missiles and weapons of mass destruction is a serious threat to Russia's security.

They have called for strict control of sensitive technologies and stressed the strict penalties that will be imposed for violations of Russian law. On January 22 of this year, the Russian government issued a "catch all" executive order providing authority to stop all transfers of dual-use goods and services for missiles and weapons of mass destruction programs, and on May 15 published detailed regulations to implement that order. They have recently developed and circulated a list of end users of concern in Iran, Libya, North Korea, and Pakistan. In the course of regular and active discussion of this issue with the Russian government, the United States has raised problem cases involving cooperation between Russian entities and the Iranian missile program. We have seen progress in this area, and a number of these cases are no longer active concerns.

Precisely because Russia needs to take effective enforcement steps to control the flow of technology, the United States needs to be able to work cooperatively with the Russian government to assure further progress. H.R. 2709 would undercut the cooperation we have worked to achieve with the Russian government without helping us solve the problem of technology transfer. The legislation's unilateral nature could also hurt our increasing cooperation with Russian government agencies in other vital areas such as law enforcement, counter-narcotics, and combating transnational crime. Furthermore, Russia would interpret this law as an infringement of its sovereignty, affecting our ability to work with Russia on broader U.S. policy goals and on regional and global issues.

Finally, Title I of H.R. 2709 is not needed. Existing law, such as the missile technology control provisions of the Arms Export Control Act, provides a sufficient basis for imposing sanctions to prevent missile proliferation to Iran and elsewhere.

I also note that it is disappointing that the Congress attached Title II, the "Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act of 1997," to this problematic and counterproductive bill. Because Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) implementation legislation has not been enacted, the United States has not yet fully carried out its obligations under the CWC. The CWC implementing legislation has strong bipartisan support, and should be passed by the Congress as a free-standing bill without further delay. I note, however, that sections 213(e)(2)(B)(iii), 213(e)(3)(B)(v), and 213(f) of Title II could interfere with certain of my exclusive constitutional powers, and I urge the Congress to correct these constitutional deficiencies.

For the reasons stated, I am compelled to return H.R. 2709 without my approval.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, June 23, 1998.